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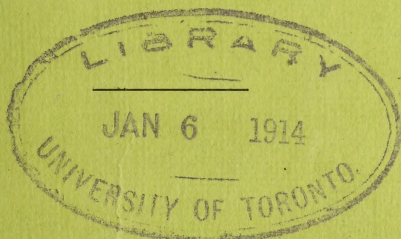
William C. Brown

President

New York Central Lines

AT ANNUAL DINNER OF

THE RAILWAY BUSINESS ASSOCIATION



HOTEL WALDORF-ASTORIA, NEW YORK CITY

WEDNESDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 10, 1909

ADDRESS OF
WILLIAM C. BROWN

President
New York Central Lines

AT

Annual Dinner of the Railway Business Association

Waldorf-Astoria Hotel

Wednesday Evening, November 10, 1909

MR. TOASTMASTER AND GENTLEMEN OF THE
RAILWAY BUSINESS ASSOCIATION :

Your Association, as I understand its purpose, was organized to promote more harmonious relations between the public and the great transportation interests of the country; and in this work, the importance of which can hardly be exaggerated, every citizen, no matter where located or what his business, may well wish you a hearty God-speed.

The question of the regulation of these great instrumentalities of commerce for the purpose of correcting wrongs and abuses and preventing their recurrence has overshadowed almost all other questions during the last four years and promises to be an important factor during the coming session of Congress.

There was a time when the fundamental right of the Nation and States to regulate and control the railroads was seriously discussed and questioned. Happily for all—the railroads as well as the public—this question is no longer open for debate.

The question of the limitation of the right of regulation, the extent to which it should be exercised, is still open for discussion—not in a harsh or hostile spirit, not for the purpose of fixing by law an arbitrary point beyond which such regulation shall not go; but in a spirit of friendly co-operation to try and ascertain, in the interest alike of the public and the railroads, that happy mean which shall result in the maximum benefit to the patrons of the railroads and the minimum embarrassment in the way of restrictive regulation to the railroads of the Nation.

The question has been narrowed down marvelously in the last four years, the distance which separates the two parties to this important question is extremely small; and such associations as yours, Mr. Toastmaster, can do much in bringing about a determination that will be fair and just to all interests.

I am particularly happy to-night in having assigned to me a subject, the far-reaching importance of which few appreciate, and in regard to which, when its full significance and importance is realized, there will be little difference of opinion.

From the dawn of civilization the drift of population has been from the East to the West; and through all the centuries, absorbing and assimilating the millions of the overflow of older civilizations, the West has continually called for more.

From early in the Seventeenth Century the nations of the Old World have found on this continent an imperatively necessary vent—a safety valve. The broad prairies of the United States have beckoned to the discontented, the dispossessed and unfortunate of every race and clime, and here they have found a foundation upon which to build new hopes and aspirations.

At the close of the Civil War in 1865, the states of Iowa, Minnesota and Nebraska would have furnished a quarter section of Government land to every veteran mustered out of the military service of the Nation. Great states and territories, with their wealth of primeval forest and virgin soil, lay waiting to be peopled.

To-day all this is changed. The day of "free land for Free-men," is past. No longer can the homestead be had for the asking. The frontier, like the Indian, has become a tradition—an interesting item in the Nation's history.

Almost the last county of the last state or territory where cultivation is possible has been settled. Temporarily the tide of emigration is setting up into western Canada, but this limited territory will soon be filled. Occasionally an Indian reservation is opened for settlement and tens of thousands of eager settlers gather on the borders waiting the word that sends them like a flood sweeping over the land, realizing that our once apparently inexhaustible public domain is gone forever.

The wave of population, beginning with the Grecian colonies along the Mediterranean a thousand years before the birth of Christ, followed by the distribution of the Legions of Rome over Europe, and twenty-five centuries later crossing the Atlantic to the eastern shores of the new world, has at last broken on the eastern shore of the Pacific, and just beyond that ocean lies the Orient with its teeming millions.

The advance column of this great westward-moving procession of the centuries has encircled the globe; soon a great human undertow must set back toward the East, and the westward tide will settle in turbulent, dangerous eddies and whirlpools about the great centers of population.

A short time before the close of a life devoted to a most profound study of history and participation in the political affairs of his time, Lord Macaulay, the eminent English historian, in a letter written to his friend, Mr. H. S. Randall, a citizen of this country, under date of May 23, 1857, said:

“As long as you have a boundless extent of fertile unoccupied land, your laboring population will be far more at ease than the laboring population of the old world.

“But the time will come when New England will be as thickly peopled as Old England.

“You will have your Manchesters and your Birminghams, and in these Manchesters and Birminghams hundreds of thousands of artisans will assuredly be sometime out of work. Then your institutions will be fairly brought to the test.”

Two important features of this remarkable prophesy of a half century ago have been fulfilled.

The boundless extent of fertile unoccupied land is gone.

We have our Manchesters and our Birminghams by the score and in times of great depression such as will certainly come, our unemployed will be numbered not by the hundreds of thousands but by the million.

Is it not time to “take thought of the morrow,” and to make such preparation as may be possible against the day of stress and test predicted by Macaulay?

In this direction, I desire to briefly suggest two plans having a common purpose and perhaps equal in importance.

First: The broadening and, in a way, the specializing of our methods of education in all our schools and colleges. I would give no less attention to graduating lawyers and physicians, but would give a great deal

more to turning out of our public schools young men with a good common-school education plus a year's practical training at some useful trade.

I would have a first-class manual training school attached to every high school and to every college and university, where young men could be turned out good, practical, journeyman blacksmiths, boilermakers, carpenters, cabinet makers, plumbers, or skilled workmen at some other useful trade.

I would increase the capacity of these schools to accommodate every child in the community and then I would make attendance compulsory.

I have discussed this question with officials of public school boards and with the presidents of some of our colleges, and in a majority of cases I have been met with the suggestion that a course of this kind would be likely to antagonize organized labor. I am glad to-night that the doubt as to the advisability of a course of this kind on that account can be definitely set at rest. Yesterday, at the annual convention of the American Federation of Labor a special committee on industrial education, appointed one year ago to make a study of this subject, submitted their report, from which the following is an extract:

“Organized labor favors that plan of industrial training which will give our boys and girls such training as will help them to advance after they are in industry. We believe that as much attention should be given to the proper education of those who work at our industry as is now given to those who prepare to enter professional and managerial careers.”

I would make our agricultural colleges in fact what they are in name by limiting admission to young men who want to study and school themselves in scientific agri-

culture to the end that graduates of these colleges should be first-class farmers thoroughly equipped for and vitally interested in that most honorable profession.

I realize that a policy of this kind will cost millions on millions of money, but no man can estimate the cost in treasure and possibly in blood of a contrary policy.

Second: I would postpone the day of test fore-shadowed by Lord Macaulay by doubling our rural population, and would do this by more than doubling the product per acre of the nation's farms.

The United States with the most fertile soil and favorable climate in the world, but with its careless, un-informed methods of seed selection, fertilization and cultivation, produces an annual average yield of less than fourteen bushels of wheat per acre, while England produces more than thirty-two; Germany about twenty-eight; the Netherlands more than thirty-four, and France, approximately twenty.

Of oats, the United States produces an average annual yield of twenty-three and seven-tenths bushels per acre, England forty-two, Germany forty-six, and the Netherlands fifty-three.

The average yield of potatoes in the United States is eighty-five bushels per acre, while that of Germany, Belgium and Great Britain is two hundred and fifty bushels.

Potatoes, like wheat, corn and bread, are a food staple of the poor man.

Germany, with an arable area no greater than some of our largest states, produces approximately two billion bushels of potatoes annually, while the aggregate crop of the United States averages barely two hundred and seventy-five million bushels per annum; and, in the year

ended June 30, 1909, we imported eight million three hundred and eighty-four thousand bushels.

For half a century we have proudly plumed ourselves as the granary of the world and our annual exports of food stuffs have formed the basis for a large balance of trade in our favor. Our exports of this character show a steady and alarmingly rapid decline. In the past, increase in population, increase in consumption, have been met by multiplied acres. This is no longer possible, or at least only to a very limited and constantly diminishing extent. Increased consumption in the future must be provided for not by an increase in acres but by an increase in the yield per acre.

Each year immigration and natural increase add approximately two million hungry mouths to be fed and it calls for an increase of approximately seventy-five million bushels of food producing cereal per annum to supply this demand.

In 1898 the total acreage of corn, wheat, oats, barley and rye was 151,780,501, and we exported 598,715,000 bushels. In 1907 the acreage had increased to 185,353,000 acres, or an increase of twenty-two per cent, while our exports were only 227,422,000 bushels, or a decrease of sixty-nine per cent.

This tremendous falling off in exports of grain and its products suggests the possibility that the grain may have been fed to stock and exported in the shape of beef and pork, but the falling off in the exports of these commodities for the period named is fully as startling as in grain.

In 1900 the report of the Agricultural Department shows 27,610,000 cattle on the Nation's farms. In 1908 there were 50,100,000, an increase of eighty-one per cent, but our exports of beef were fourteen per cent less.

Stated in another way, in 1900 we exported twenty-four and four-tenths pounds for each head of cattle owned, while in 1908 we exported only eleven and one-half pounds, a decrease of fifty-three per cent.

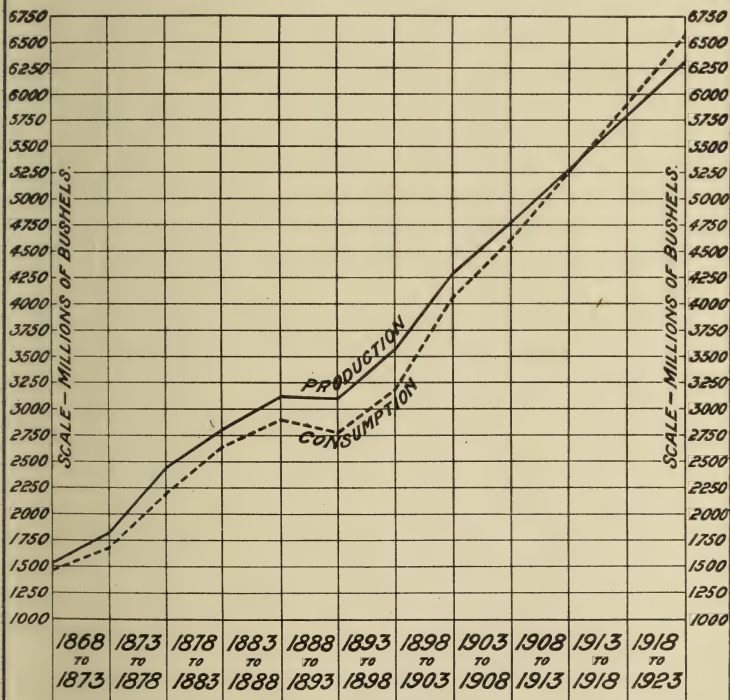
In 1899 the number of swine owned was something more than thirty-eight and one-half million. In 1908 this had increased to more than fifty-six million, or forty-five per cent, but our exports of pork and its products showed a decrease of more than four hundred and forty-one million pounds.

During the same period, while the number of cows increased thirty-four per cent, our exports of butter and cheese went down from approximately seventy-nine million pounds to less than fifteen million, and our imports went up from ten million to nearly thirty-three and one-half million pounds, or two hundred and thirty-two per cent.

The preliminary report of the Bureau of Statistics for the year ended June 30, 1909, shows a falling off, as compared with the previous year, in the exports of beef and tallow of thirty-five per cent; while the decline in the exports of pork and its products exceeds fifteen per cent. The same report shows that exports of grain for the same period declined twenty-nine per cent.

If the converging lines of production and consumption in the United States continue to approach each other as they have during the past ten years, before the middle of the next decade the last vessel loaded with the agricultural product of this country will have left our shores, the great exporting grain elevators in our seaboard cities will stand empty, and this great nation, like those of the Old World, will be looking for a place to buy the necessities of life.

**PRODUCTION
OF
CORN, WHEAT, OATS, BARLEY & RYE IN THE
UNITED STATES
AND AMOUNT REQUIRED FOR
DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION
BASED ON AVERAGES OF FIVE YEAR PERIODS
(YEARS FOLLOWING 1908 CALCULATED ON
RATE OF INCREASE SINCE 1902)**



The above graphic chart indicates that about the year 1914 the consumption of cereals in this country will have overtaken production, and unless there is a large increase in production per acre, the lines will diverge after that year more rapidly than they are now converging.

I have been greatly interested in reading an article in the November number of *The World's Work*, by Mr. James J. Hill, entitled, "What We Must Do to Be Fed," dealing with this important subject, which concludes as follows:

"The value of our annual farm product is now about eight billion dollars. It might easily be doubled. When the forests are all cut down and the mines are nothing but empty holes in the ground, the farm lands of the country will remain capable of renewing their bounty forever. But they must have proper treatment. To provide this, as a matter of self-interest and of national safety, is the most imperative present duty of our people. * * * * *

The armed fleets of an enemy approaching our harbors would be no more alarming than the relentless advance of a day when we shall have neither sufficient food nor the means to purchase it for our population. The farmers of the nation must save it in the future, just as they built its greatness in the past.

"The man who assumes to be the farmer's friend or hold his interests dear will constitute himself a missionary of the new dispensation. It is an act of patriotic service to the country. It is a contribution to the welfare of all humanity. It will strengthen the pillars of a government that must otherwise be endangered by some popular upheaval when the land can no longer sustain the population that its bosom bears. Here lies the true secret of our anxious interest in agricultural methods; because, in the long run, they mean life or death to future millions who are no strangers or invaders, but our own children's children, and who will pass judgment upon us according to what we have made of the world in which their lot is to be cast."

Can the importance of this condition be exaggerated? Is it not time that every patriotic citizen was aroused to ascertain the cause and find and apply the remedy? Can there be a duty of higher or broader patriotism or more

comprehensive philanthropy? What is the cause, and can a remedy be found?

The land, our kindly, patient mother earth, upon which not only prosperity, but life itself, depends, is year after year being robbed and impoverished.

Our average annual yield of wheat for ten years was less than fourteen bushels per acre. This is less than it was thirty years ago. Instead of improving we are going backward.

I do not say this in a spirit of criticism or censure of the farmers of the Nation.

A large majority of them started with nothing but a quarter section of unbroken prairie, a team of horses or yoke of cattle, a plow and harrow, and a humble cabin to shelter his little family from the heat of summer and storms of winter.

The success he has achieved has been the result of years of arduous toil; the knowledge he has gained has been in the hard school of experience.

The farmer has always been the state builder, the pioneer. He it is who has built up and made the Nation what it is, and the General Government can discharge the obligation it owes the great agricultural interests in no better way than in spending money freely in bettering agricultural conditions.

One hundred years ago the average production of Great Britain was about the same as our present yield. The Nation became alarmed and a royal commission (which is still in existence) was appointed, a campaign of education was entered upon, and to-day the farms of the United Kingdom, upon which crops have been raised for centuries, with general climatic conditions less favorable than ours, produce almost two and a quarter times the wheat per acre that we do.

France, with her abounding prosperity, her marvelous wealth of agricultural resources, which have made her the creditor nation of the world, maintains 45,000 rural schools with agricultural departments in the shape of gardens and small fields where systematic scientific cultivation and conservation of the soil is taught.

Since 1873, Belgium has required every school in the kingdom to maintain a field not less than thirty-nine and one-half square rods for the purpose of instructing the pupils in this most important work.

Here is where this work of education should begin, and instruction of this character undertaken by our rural schools, where the farmer boys and girls attend, would be speedily and powerfully reflected in improved methods on our farms.

The increased value of corn, wheat, oats and barley in the United States, provided the average yield per acre of the same crops in Germany had been raised, and assuming a production of fifty bushels of corn to the acre, would have amounted to the stupendous total during the year 1907 of \$2,280,000,000; while the increased value of the same cereals of the crop of 1909, computed on the same basis, would have been three and one-quarter billion dollars.

There is no soil or climate that is naturally superior to that of the United States, and no nation on earth can produce a larger crop per acre than this country if our soil is intelligently tilled.

Ninety years ago, the farms of the state of New York produced larger average crops than the most fertile state in the Union produces to-day.

In 1860 she stood first as an agricultural state and she can (if she will) again take her place at the head of the procession of great agricultural states.

The year 1908 was not as favorable for the production of crops in New York as the average year, but a gentleman sitting at one of our tables here to-night, a member of your organization, can show a record in the crop line which I can not equal on my farm in one of the richest valleys in the southwest part of the great agricultural state of Iowa.

Listen to this: Three hundred and fifty to four hundred bushels of potatoes per acre. Fifty bushels of shelled corn. Thirty-five tons of beets. Four tons of hay per acre. This was the result not of so-called intensive farming—just intelligent farming, and it was not in one of those favored fertile valleys in the central or southern part of the state, but was away up in the extreme northern part, at the north end of Lake Champlain, within twelve miles of the Canadian line.

There is not a farm in New York state where a similar record can not be made if the farmer can be taught similar intelligent methods, but in the language of the Apostle, "How shall they believe who have not heard, and how shall they hear without a preacher."

The field is eagerly awaiting the preacher. In April of this year the New York Central Railroad tendered to the New York State College of Agriculture the use of a special train consisting of a combination car, four coaches and a dining car, for a trip through that portion of the state traversed by our lines. Twenty-one professors and advanced students of the New York State College of Agriculture at Cornell University and the agricultural school at St. Lawrence University made up the party.

Thirty-one towns were visited and lectures were given to audiences ranging from two to six hundred earnest, interested farmers.

The object of the trip was to awaken interest, to prepare the ground for the seed to be sown later. These trips will be repeated and extended and we hope it is but the beginning of a broad and comprehensive scheme of education. Lectures of this kind are beneficial, but the things that will accomplish results are object lessons—opportunities for the farmer to *see* the thing done instead of being told how it can be done.

The first requisite is a thorough awakening of our people to a realization of the startling significance, the over-shadowing importance of this condition; then a systematic, persevering campaign of education. The General Government should give it first place among the questions pressing for consideration. Money should be provided liberally and expended honestly and intelligently. Every scheme for the reclamation of arid land by the Government should be pushed to completion and the land opened to settlement at the earliest possible moment.

Land susceptible of cultivation, either by irrigation or without it, that is included in forest reserves should be excluded from such reserves and made available for settlement under such conditions as will insure prompt, intelligent and continuous cultivation.

Each state should take similar action. Boards of Trade, Chambers of Commerce, and other public associations should take up the work.

The Chamber of Commerce of Rochester, New York, is conducting an active campaign of education and is doing most efficient work along these lines.

The railroads should co-operate with the state agricultural colleges and with all institutions having departments of agriculture, in arranging for meetings of farmers in villages and country school houses, for the

purpose of preaching this great gospel of better methods, which means more profitable farming. I am going to recommend to the owners of the roads with which I am connected the purchase of land to be used as experimental farms according to the most advanced methods of seed selection, fertilization and cultivation, at the expense of the road, but under the auspices of the agricultural college of the state in which the farm is located. If this recommendation is adopted, I shall hope to see it followed by a majority of the roads of the country.

The United States is building two or three great battleships almost every year, which cost, fully equipped, perhaps an average of nine million dollars each, and it costs close to a million a year **each to man**, supply and maintain them.

What one of these fighting machines costs the Government would establish and fully equip two splendid experimental farms of six hundred and forty acres each, in every state in the Union, to be operated by the General Government.

The establishment of such farms by the Government would soon be followed by one-hundred-and-sixty-acre farms owned and operated by the state in every county in our great agricultural states.

Such farms, once established, would not only be self-sustaining, but, in my opinion, would show a handsome profit. The effect of such a system of practical education upon the product and profit of the Nation's farms would be almost beyond comprehension.

Every thriftless and uninformed farmer would quickly note the difference between the result of his loose methods and those of the experimental farm, and benefit by the comparison.

Men who have no books on this important subject and who could find no time to study them if they had, would learn by that most apt and thorough teacher, observation, the value of improved methods and would adopt them.

Let the Government invest the price of one battleship in this important work, follow the investment up intelligently and perseveringly for ten years, and the value that will have been added to each year's crops of the Nation's farms will buy and pay for every battleship in all the navies of the world to-day.

Adopt this policy and it will give to the great business of agriculture a new birth of marvelous possibilities and make the cultivation of the soil a profession rather than a vocation. It will double the wealth of the Nation's farms and quadruple the influence, political and financial, of the Nation's farmers.

Ten years after such a system becomes fully effective, the farmers will own a large share, if not a majority, of the Nation's railroads, and this will insure in larger measure than is possible under present conditions that industrial peace and tranquility so vital to enduring prosperity.

Above and beyond all other considerations this stimulation of interest in, and addition to the wealth of, agriculture will return the preponderance of political power to the rural districts, where it can be more safely lodged than in the congested centers of population, already ominously powerful in many of our states, and indefinitely postpone that dread test of the permanency of our institutions predicted by Macaulay a half century ago.

